United Nations A/C.4/63/SR.16

General Assembly
Sixty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
19 December 2008

Original: English

# Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

**Summary record of the 16th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 24 October 2008, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman*: Mr. Argüello ..... (Argentina)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 28: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space** (*continued*)

*Draft resolution A/C.4/63/L.2/Rev.1*

1. **Mr. González** (Colombia), introducing the draft resolution, expressed the hope that it would be adopted without a vote. He pointed out that, in paragraph 23, the words "from 24 to 27 November 2008" should be replaced by the words "in 2009".

2. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

3. *Draft resolution A/C.4/63/L.2/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.*

**Agenda item 31: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects** (*continued*)

4. **Ms. El Alaoui** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the establishment or extension of a peacekeeping operation should be strictly in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Operations should obtain the consent of the parties, refrain from the use of force, except in self-defence, and observe impartiality. They should also respect the full equality, political independence and territorial integrity of States and refrain from intervention in matters of domestic jurisdiction.

5. Primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lay with the United Nations. In that context, she emphasized the importance of the joint African Union-United Nations action plan for United Nations assistance to African Union peacekeeping capacity-building in the short and long term.

6. From the outset, peacekeeping operations should be provided with political support, sufficient human, financial and logistical resources, a clearly defined mandate and an exit strategy, and they should be accompanied by a well-planned peace process that was supported by the parties concerned. Moreover, since the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel in the field were of paramount importance — indeed the Non-Aligned Movement condemned the killing of, or any act of violence against, United Nations peacekeepers — troop-contributing countries should be fully involved in every aspect and at every stage of peacekeeping operations. Their experience could also be drawn upon when the Security Council implemented, extended or adjusted peacekeeping mandates. Better interaction between troop-contributing countries and the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations could contribute to a more inclusive consultation and decision-making process.

7. Since the responsibility for formulating concepts, policies and budgetary allocations relating to peacekeeping lay with the General Assembly, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was the only body with the authority to review the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects.

8. The Non-Aligned Movement had taken note of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the establishment of the Department of Field Support. Given the importance of preserving unity of command and clear command structures, both in the field and at Headquarters, it attached great importance to the functioning of the Integrated Missions Planning Process.

9. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterated its commitment to zero tolerance for acts of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel, whatever their category. The United Nations should ensure that steps were taken to vindicate any peacekeeping mission, troop-contributing country or individual peacekeepers falsely accused of misconduct. The revised draft model memorandum of understanding adopted by the General Assembly should be implemented, to avoid conflicting views on the exclusive jurisdiction of Member States and the role of the Office of Internal Oversight Services in that regard.

10. Regarding the question of security sector reform she said that such reform should be integrated into the broad framework of United Nations rule of law activities, to ensure that security sector reform activities did not duplicate work done in the rule of law area. The General Assembly should decide on its approach to such reform, while the formulation of strategies should be carried out at the intergovernmental level.

11. Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement were insufficiently represented, particularly at

professional level, in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. The current imbalance of geographical representation should be rectified, particularly as it applied to unrepresented and underrepresented troop-contributing countries.

12. After expressing concern over the significant amounts of reimbursements currently owed by the United Nations to the troop-contributing countries, and reiterating the view that all Member States must pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, she drew attention to a disturbing fact, namely, that at the past two sessions, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had been unable to adopt its report on time owing to controversy over specific issues. Such political discord did not help the Secretariat in preparing for peacekeeping operations.

13. Finally, recalling that a majority of the troops deployed on peacekeeping operations in recent years had been supplied by members of the Non-Aligned Movement, she called for a minute of silence to honour the peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the service of peace.

14. *At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.*

15. **Mr. Ripert** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; and, in addition, Armenia and Ukraine, said that the international community should continue to be guided by the recommendations of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. The European Union and the United Nations had cooperated closely over the past few years, thanks to their shared understanding of crisis management. They believed that all available instruments — political, civil and military — should be mobilized and that the transition from crisis management to the peacebuilding phase should be as smooth as possible. They also firmly believed in prevention.

16. With the launch in 2007 of its Instrument for Stability, the European Union had an additional effective tool at its disposal to respond rapidly and flexibly to crisis situations. In recent years, the Union had played a major role in peacekeeping. It was by far the biggest financial contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, accounting for over 40 per cent of the budget and also provided almost 12 per cent of uniformed personnel. The Union also participated directly in international peacekeeping missions. In recent years, it had led several crisis-management operations. The cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union was exemplified by the European Union Force in Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR Chad/CAR). The Union was also stepping up its cooperation with the African Union, including through the African Peace Facility, which aimed to support the African Union in peacekeeping operations run by Africans.

17. The European Union had contributed to United Nations peacekeeping efforts in a number of ways. In Georgia, mediation led by the Presidency of the Union had been instrumental in the achievement of a ceasefire in the conflict that had broken out in August 2008. The European Union had taken the initiative to protect ships belonging to the World Food Programme (WFP) off the Somali coast and it was currently establishing new forms of operational cooperation with the United Nations at sea.

18. In view of the importance of conflict prevention, the European Union emphasized the essential role of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and the importance of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. It also attached great importance to the protection of civilians and to mechanisms to combat impunity, in particular the International Criminal Court.

19. He welcomed the new booklet on United Nations peacekeeping operations and looked forward to the early development of other ground rules that took account of the lessons learned from recent peacekeeping operations. In that connection, the European Union welcomed the work being done on a doctrine for Formed Police Units, which would provide Member States and missions with much-needed clarification concerning their role. Member States should also be regularly informed about the progress made in strengthening the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and about the recruitment process within the new Office of Military Affairs. The police, too, had a crucial role in peacekeeping operations, so the Police Division might well be understaffed. The European Union set great store by the new security sector reform and rule of law competencies within the Department of

Peacekeeping Operations, particularly with regard to exit strategies.

20. Finally, he said that the safety and security of United Nations personnel were of paramount concern. The European Union strongly condemned recent attacks on such personnel and it paid tribute to the 2,518 peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the name of peace. It also called for improved cooperation between troop-contributing countries, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Safety and Security.

21. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the basic principles of peacekeeping, namely consent of the parties, impartiality and use of force only in self-defence and in defence of the mandate authorized by the Organization, must be respected and participation in peacekeeping operations must be universal. Primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security lay with the United Nations. Regional arrangements must be in conformity with Chapter VIII of the Charter, must not supplant the United Nations and must be subject to the guiding principles of peacekeeping operations. While the various related resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in recent years were welcome, much remained to be done.

22. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations played an important role as a forum for dialogue on all issues relating to peacekeeping operations and as a place where Member States could express their views. Its work must continue to be strengthened. He hoped that, at its next session, the Special Committee's report would be adopted in a timely manner.

23. Steps must be taken to ensure unity of command, promote integration and strengthen operational capacity both at Headquarters and in the field. Continued close cooperation between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) was essential. Furthermore, it was necessary to improve coordination between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries and to strengthen measures aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability.

24. While acknowledging that most peacekeeping personnel were committed to the Organization's objectives, he reiterated the Group's commitment to the policy of zero tolerance and to the implementation of measures to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel. Meanwhile, the protection and security of peacekeeping personnel remained a priority issue for Rio Group countries and should, therefore, be discussed in depth by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

25. He reaffirmed the Group's support for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and welcomed the extension of the Mission's mandate. He also called on all Member States to deepen their commitment to the Government and people of Haiti, particularly in view of the natural disasters that had recently hit that country. Support to Haiti should be in accordance with the principles of international solidarity; donor community support was particularly important.

26. Given that proper training of peacekeeping personnel was essential to the success of peacekeeping missions, he noted with concern that, lately, such support had been very limited. He also noted with concern that some troop-contributing countries had yet to be reimbursed. The Secretariat must find practical ways of addressing the situation and report back to Member States as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Member States must pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

27. Lastly, he paid tribute to all the men and women who had served under the United Nations flag and honoured the memory of the more than 2,400 peacekeeping personnel who had given their lives for such a noble cause.

28. **Mr. O'Brien** (Australia), speaking on behalf of the CANZ group (Australia, Canada and New Zealand), and noting that demand for United Nations peacekeeping missions continued to increase, said that when considering the future of United Nations peacekeeping, it was important to return to the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809). One of the key findings of that report concerned the need for clear, credible and achievable mandates and for the resources to match. Peacekeeping operation mandates must not create expectations that could not be met. The international community must be realistic about what was achievable within the resources that it was willing or able to provide.

29. The CANZ countries had particular concerns regarding the progress of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). He noted that the international community had faced challenges in mobilizing the needed resources and that numerous bureaucratic, logistical and operational problems persisted. DPKO should insist that the Sudan comply with its status-of-forces agreement. The Secretariat and the host Government must work together to ensure that UNAMID implemented its mandate fully and effectively. The challenges facing UNAMID must be borne in mind when considering new peacekeeping operations.

30. He welcomed the publication of the "capstone doctrine" earlier that year and looked forward to the development of subordinate doctrine and guidance. DPKO doctrine was essential to ensuring a common understanding of the issues facing United Nations field missions. The Secretariat should brief the Committee on progress made in developing guidance for United Nations peacekeeping operations, in line with the "Peace Operations 2010" reform agenda.

31. DPKO should also develop doctrine and guidance on civilian protection since military and police personnel deployed to protect civilians did not always receive appropriate guidance. The anticipated engagement with Member States on the development of doctrine on formed police units, meanwhile, was welcome.

32. He supported the ongoing discussions on a United Nations-wide policy on security system reform and hoped that the concept would be coordinated within discussions on peacekeeping policy. International support for reform of security institutions and mechanisms must be based on local ownership, democratic civilian control and whole-of-system integration.

33. The increasing complexity of peacekeeping operations and the deployment of peacekeepers in high-threat environments required the United Nations to make the best possible use of advanced technology, particularly in the areas of communications and surveillance. He hoped that DPKO would embrace the opportunities available to provide a safer environment for peacekeepers through the use of advanced capabilities such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and looked forward to receiving an update from the Secretariat in that regard.

34. The CANZ countries were deeply saddened by peacekeeper fatalities. Peacekeeping operations must have the mandate and the capacity to defend United Nations personnel and facilities. The Secretariat, meanwhile, must have the analysis, early-warning and crisis capacity to prevent and manage such situations. Appropriate security arrangements for police and military experts on mission must be implemented. He looked forward to receiving an update from the Secretariat in that regard.

35. While significant progress had been made in dealing with serious misconduct, the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse continued. He called on all Member States to adhere rigorously to the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy and to discipline those who transgressed the norms of conduct. The international community should support the implementation of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel.

36. Finally, he noted that United Nations peacekeeping was a unique tool that had evolved dramatically over the past 60 years. It was a tool that must be used wisely; it might not be appropriate in all circumstances. As long-term participants in such efforts, the CANZ countries stood ready to work with other Member States and with the Secretariat to ensure that peacekeeping continued to play a positive and vital role in maintaining international peace and security.

37. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba) expressed the hope that the restructuring of DPKO through the establishment of DFS would lead to greater efficiency, particularly with regard to unity of command both in the field and at Headquarters, and looked forward to the Secretary-General's related report.

38. Peacekeeping operations did not do away with the need to address the underlying causes of conflicts. They were a temporary measure aimed at providing a secure environment for the implementation of a long-term strategy towards sustainable economic and social development. Peacekeeping operations must be in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter, particularly those relating to sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-intervention; must respect the principles of consent of the parties, impartiality and use of force only in self-defence; and must have a clear and

realistic mandate, concrete objectives, adequate resources and a clear exit strategy. Regional arrangements, while useful, must be in full compliance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

39. It was important to continue strengthening cooperation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries, to give the latter greater input throughout the decision-making process. Recruitment should respect the principle of equitable geographic distribution and there should be greater transparency when filling high-level posts, in order to achieve an appropriate balance between developing and developed countries.

40. Her delegation supported the zero-tolerance policy and hoped that the memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries would be implemented without delay.

41. Lastly, she paid tribute to all those who had given their lives in the service of peace.

42. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said that while United Nations peacekeeping missions were seen as a legitimate and effective way to help solve and mitigate the effects of conflicts around the world, the significant increase in troop and police deployments and the corresponding rise in peacekeeping mission budgets was placing a significant strain on the Organization and its Member States. Moreover, the current financial crisis threatened to divert essential resources away from peacekeeping. Against such a backdrop, mandates must be realistic and all missions must be given the resources they needed. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General's efforts to accelerate deployment of UNAMID, which was currently under considerable logistical and financial constraints, and it strongly condemned all acts of violence against UNAMID personnel and underscored that the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

43. Since 2004, Brazil had been contributing troops to MINUSTAH, which represented an important opportunity to put into practice an integrated approach to peacekeeping. No peace was sustainable without development and political reconciliation. An important aspect of the mission's mandate was the implementation of quick-impact projects to provide the population with the dividends of peace. However, the combined impact of recent hurricanes and the global food crisis threatened to undermine progress made in recent years and the Haitian people needed immediate and concrete help.

44. Brazil's experience in Haiti had inspired it in the coordination of the Peacebuilding Commission's Guinea-Bissau configuration. The Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau, approved earlier that month, aimed to mobilize resources and galvanize the international community to take concerted action in a number of critical areas. The use of Peacebuilding Fund resources for quick-win projects would help provide immediate support in critical areas while the long-term foundations for peace were being established. The implementation of the Strategic Framework, meanwhile, should contribute to a more prosperous and peaceful Guinea-Bissau.

45. Lastly, she said that Brazil was proud of its contribution to peacekeeping missions and paid tribute to all those peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the service of peace.

46. **Mr. Berrah** (Algeria) said that support must be provided to regional organizations willing to undertake bold peacekeeping initiatives. That support must be part of a global approach promoting the development of partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations.

47. He welcomed the fact that Africa continued to be a central focus of efforts to reform United Nations peacekeeping operations. The African Union had also undertaken a series of initiatives that would eventually enable it to establish an African Standby Force and that would help it build capacity in the areas of rapid response, mediation and conflict prevention. By taking such an approach, the States members of the African Union were demonstrating their willingness to take on additional peacekeeping responsibilities and to become less dependent on the international community for crisis resolution in Africa.

48. Although the United Nations was committed, in principle, to supporting African peacekeeping operations, political and practical issues remained. DPKO should clarify the type and amount of assistance it was able to contribute to the African peacekeeping effort and other partners, such as the European Union, the North American Treaty Organization and bilateral aid donors, should clarify what they could contribute to the institutional development and capacity-building of the African Union.

49. Moreover, logistical and financial issues had yet to be addressed in a satisfactory manner; donors were focused on funding training programmes and DPKO was concentrating on current operations rather than on long-term capacity-building. He expressed the hope that new cooperation opportunities would become available as a result of contacts made between the high-level panel on the financing of African Union peacekeeping operations and donors and the heads of the African Union.

50. The failure of warring factions to follow through on their commitments was a major factor in the escalation of conflicts in various parts of the world. Diplomatic initiative was all the more important when dealing with such challenges.

51. Finally, noting that Security Council resolutions were often somewhat idealistic given the complex and changing realities, he suggested that the Security Council should review the mandate and resources of certain peacekeeping missions more frequently in order to make any adjustments that might be necessary.

52. **Mr. Mohamed** (Sudan), recalling that 2008 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the commencement of United Nations peacekeeping operations, stressed that preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding were just as important as peacekeeping operations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Peace could not be achieved without strengthening efforts aimed at realizing economic and social development, eradicating poverty, mitigating the impact of rising food costs and addressing climate change.

53. Peacekeeping operations should respect the principles enshrined in the Charter and in their mandates, including respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs, consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence. Ignoring those principles or attempting to reinterpret them would reflect negatively on the credibility of the United Nations.

54. In respect of the situation in Darfur, his Government had fulfilled all of its obligations under Security Council resolution 1769 (2007) establishing the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and had given UNAMID all possible technical, logistical and administrative assistance. His Government was fully committed to the agreed goal of achieving 80 per cent deployment of UNAMID forces by March 2009. On the diplomatic front, a joint committee of the African Union and the League of Arab States had been established to coordinate various African, Arab and domestic initiatives aimed at reaching a political settlement.

55. Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM/A) was proceeding smoothly and in coordination with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). The necessary governmental structures and commissions at the federal and state levels had been established and a census had been completed in preparation for elections.

56. Security sector reform should take into account the need for sustainable economic and social development, as had been stressed by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and in the Principles and Guidelines for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. It should be noted that such reform was the sovereign right and primary responsibility of States and should not be used as a justification for imposing external models or dictates. In the context of the Organization, security sector reform, as it related to the mandate of peacekeeping operations, was the concern of the General Assembly.

57. Commending the role played by the African Union in UNAMID, he said that it was important to follow up the recommendations of the 2005 World Summit Outcome on supporting the Union's peacekeeping abilities and the development and implementation of a 10-year plan for capacity-building with the Union. His delegation looked forward to hearing the recommendations of the group of experts headed by the former Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, on long-term and predictable funding for African-led peace support operations.

58. The United Nations policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse in its peacekeeping operations should be strictly enforced. In that connection, his delegation was awaiting the results of the investigation into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse committed in Juba.

59. In order for a peacekeeping operation to succeed, a clear exit strategy should be incorporated into its mandate. Procurement procedures should be transparent and favour local and regional suppliers. In order to counter the impression that those operations were the source of problems in host environments, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

needed to pay more attention to "perception management" in order to win over the hearts and minds of local populations.

60. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, despite their increasing complexity, it was important that peacekeeping operations adhere to their mandates and respect the fundamental principles of the Charter, including respect for States' sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. The consent of the parties concerned should be obtained and clear, credible and viable mandates established. In that connection, his delegation wished to point out that there were some who had repeatedly attempted to circumvent specific principles that governed peacekeeping, namely consent, non-use of force except in self-defence and impartiality.

61. His country greatly appreciated the sacrifices made by peacekeepers. The units engaged in mine removal operations in southern Lebanon were especially worthy of praise. Peacekeeping operations in the Middle East were measured in decades and, in the case of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the Organization's first peacekeeping mission, had lasted for more than half a century. Peace in the region remained elusive because of Israel's continuing defiance of legitimate international resolutions, its hostility against its neighbours and its occupation of their territories.

62. His country attached great importance to enhancing the safety and security of peacekeeping forces and United Nations personnel. However, the use of private firms to provide security for United Nations offices would be counterproductive. There was a need to strengthen dialogue and cooperation among troop-contributing countries, DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS) with a view to setting clear and achievable mandates for peacekeeping missions.

63. In respect of the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform, his delegation was concerned by many elements of the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/62/659) for it introduced many ambiguous and controversial concepts regarding the role of security sector reform within the framework of the rule of law. In that connection, he emphasized that security sector reform was a nationally owned process and it was the sovereign right and primary responsibility of the country concerned to determine the national approach and priorities for such reform.

64. **Mr. Zaemskiy** (Russian Federation) said that while many remarkable achievements had been made in the area of peacekeeping, there had been several recent failures, the most notable being the forced suspension of the activities of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea as a result of confrontational and even obstructionist actions by one side. Another example was the atmosphere at the recent session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations during which key groups had repeatedly attempted to push through their own priorities. While the situation had eventually been resolved, he cautioned that, should that confrontation continue, it could pose a grave threat to peacekeeping as a whole.

65. In the transition from traditional peacekeeping to more complex operations, it was important to take into account the interests of all the parties concerned, to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and to encourage national ownership; programmes should be implemented only with the consent of national Governments. It was time to develop a common strategy for the maintenance of international peace and security; the main elements of such a strategy should be preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

66. The military expertise of United Nations peacekeeping operations was insufficient. His delegation had submitted an initiative to revitalize the United Nations Military Staff Committee with a view to involving that Committee in the process of verifying the preparedness of assigned peacekeeping troops and services and providing the Security Council with reliable and up-to-date information. The intention had not been to infringe upon the Secretariat's powers but to improve United Nations peacekeeping military expertise on the whole.

67. His delegation supported plans to strengthen the Office of Military Affairs and the Police Division of DPKO, but stressed that financial discipline must be observed and that all proposals, including rules for personnel management, must be thoroughly reviewed. Any restructuring of United Nations peacekeeping operations should focus on the effective division of labour and should avoid duplication of functions.

68. Deployment of military components of United Nations operations required preliminary guarantees by

troop-contributing countries of their ability to provide peacekeeping operations with personnel and necessary logistics. An important indicator of the Organization's ability to quickly and effectively respond to emerging challenges would be the replacement of the European Union-led peacekeeping force (EUFOR) by a United Nations military component in the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). Increasing cooperation between the Secretariat, national Governments and regional organizations in the process of mission deployment was crucial to making United Nations peacekeeping more efficient. In that context, the previously submitted proposal to decentralize peace maintenance responsibilities and to strengthen the role of regional organizations appeared all the more valuable. Regional organizations could provide excellent service, as long as they acted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

69. United Nations peacekeeping was essential for maintaining international peace and security. The Russian Federation was prepared to increase its contribution to peacekeeping, particularly in the areas of humanitarian mine clearance and the training of police and other specialists. With a view to increasing Russian participation in the United Nations Standby Arrangements System, his Government invited the Secretariat to get acquainted on the ground with the engineer and military medical units of the Russian Ministry of Defence. In addition, his Government was prepared to consider sending a Russian air group to MINURCAT following a comprehensive review of the situation with the Secretariat.

70. **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal) said that the Security Council must refine the mandates of new peacekeeping operations and adjust the rules of engagement for field personnel accordingly. The core values of United Nations peacekeeping operations, such as consent of the parties, non-interference in the affairs of sovereign States and non-use of force except in self-defence, should not be compromised.

71. Military personnel played the most important role in peacekeeping operations. The varying backgrounds of the troops deployed posed a challenge that needed to be addressed with regard to maintaining the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Troop-contributing countries should be equitably represented in senior command positions in the field and at headquarters. Nepal was one of the five leading troop-contributing countries and it had pledged to increase that contribution, should there be a need if necessary. It would also like to see more of its civilians in United Nations field missions and peacekeeping operations.

72. He welcomed the development of the capstone principles, stressing that Member States should have ownership of them and that they should be endorsed by the Security Council. He also welcomed the report of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises Worldwide and suggested that Member States should be given an opportunity to discuss the contents of the report before the recommendations were implemented.

73. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should improve its working methods so that important decisions related to peacekeeping operations were not delayed.

74. The increase in civilian casualties in peacekeeping situations was unacceptable. Protection of civilians, including women and children, should be built into the mandates of peacekeeping operations and the recommendations produced in thematic resolutions and debates on that subject must be implemented. Moreover, the policy of zero tolerance for sexual abuse should be continued. Nepal would take action against any individuals for wrongdoing committed during peacekeeping assignments.

75. Finally, he stressed the need for exit strategies and pointed out that the current practice of limiting peacebuilding activities to a few countries was not a good one. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding should not be considered separately.

76. **Ms. Raz-Shechter** (Israel) commended DPKO for its work and reiterated her delegation's commitment to the restructuring of the Department, noting that strengthening and streamlining the work of DPKO was of critical importance. Israel was proud to be among the troop-contributing countries, although its role was modest.

77. Turning to current events, she said that Israel remained committed to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), one of the most significant consequences of which was the deployment of an improved peacekeeping force, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and it would continue to support UNIFIL troops. However, it remained deeply concerned about ongoing

developments along its northern border as Hizbullah was continuing to operate and to rearm itself in direct contravention of the resolution. That realignment constituted a threat not only to regional peace and stability, but also to UNIFIL troops and to the Lebanese Armed Forces.

78. The leaders of Hizbullah had acknowledged in explicit statements that Hizbullah was seeking to rearm itself and to adapt its techniques to the new realities on the ground. Therefore while welcoming the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon as an important step in reinforcing the State's control over its entire territory, she noted that a number of reports suggested that some units of that army were turning a blind eye to Hizbullah's covert military build-up. The call in Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), paragraph 8, for "the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL" meant, not only, that Hizbullah personnel could not operate openly and with arms, but, also, that the Lebanese Government should ensure that new, non-Government military infrastructure and weapons were not being brought into that area.

79. Finally, after expressing her appreciation to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for its continuous efforts since 1974 to implement the ceasefire and disengagement agreement between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, she said that Israel wished to offer its gratitude and support to all the peacekeepers and troop-contributing countries.

80. **Mr. Natalegawa** (Indonesia) said that United Nations peacekeeping activities required robust support from the entire United Nations system. Indonesia, for its part, had undertaken to increase its contribution to peacekeeping efforts and would be deploying more personnel to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

81. The Capstone principles or doctrine was one reference for peacekeeping operations; even though the views of Member States had been considered informally during the preparation of the document, the Secretariat should consult more formally with delegations on any improvements. In addition, further development of the peacekeeping doctrine should be based firmly on the guiding principles of United Nations peacekeeping: consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and in defence of the mandate. Self-defence had been defined exhaustively by international law and attempts to reinterpret its meaning should be avoided.

82. Compliance with the United Nations peacekeeping principles together with a realistic Security Council mandate, which was responsive to significant changes on the ground, were crucial for the effectiveness and safety of peacekeeping missions, and the whole United Nations system should be prepared to come to the aid of peacekeepers when necessary. In addition, cooperation, regular consultation and coherence among the Security Council, the troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat were critical to the success of peacekeeping objectives. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations could play an important role by convening exchanges with troop-contributing countries and other stakeholders. It should envisage entering into interactive dialogue with the Governments concerned through video links, so as to receive information directly. The United Nations should also ensure a coordinated approach between its own and other entities leading to integrated strategies with sustainable peace as their goal.

83. While United Nations peacekeeping was an indispensable tool for world peace and stability, the main causes of conflict needed to be addressed in order to ensure a lasting peace. In addition, when a country was moving towards a post-conflict peacebuilding stage, an integrated and balanced approach with a focus on security as well as development was imperative.

84. Concrete partnerships with the regional and subregional organizations should be explored so as to make use of the comparative advantages of the different stakeholders; the joint efforts of the African Union and the United Nations were a good example of such collaboration. Regular and proper training of peacekeepers was essential; therefore, the Integrated Training Service should provide additional support to the national training facilities of troop-contributing countries. In addition, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should provide information on its criteria for recognizing national peacekeeping training centres. Lastly, while appreciating the efforts of the Secretariat to improve the participation of Member States in the selection of senior staff in the United Nations system, Indonesia believed that the selection process could be

made more transparent by reflecting the contribution of Member States to peacekeeping operations.

85. **Mr. Okuda** (Japan) said that Japan had always been a staunch supporter of peacekeeping operations. Recently, it had hosted a seminar honouring 60 years of United Nations peacekeeping, which had contributed to the discussion on how peacekeeping should evolve and how to interrelate the stages of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding that were essential for achieving sustainable peace and stability in post-conflict nations. Discussions were also held on how to increase Japan's contribution of personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Staff officers of the Japan Self-Defence Forces were being sent to the United Nations Mission in the Sudan for the first time and Japan would seek more ways to contribute to peacekeeping operations.

86. Most peacekeeping missions were deployed in Africa, and many African troops were involved in those missions; it was therefore imperative to support peacekeeping capacity-building in African nations. In 2007, Japan had made a significant financial contribution to launch the activities of the Chadian Police for Humanitarian Protection; and, in 2008, it had contributed $15.5 million to support peacekeeping training centres in Africa.

87. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support should cooperate closely and provide full support to military and police components, for these components continued to play a fundamental role in peacekeeping missions even though the non-military components of missions had been growing significantly. The importance of protecting the safety and security of each mission could not be overemphasized. Adoption of advanced safety and security measures should be vigorously considered and safety standards for utilizing commercially contracted aircraft for United Nations operations carefully reviewed.

88. Reports of misconduct among peacekeepers were of great concern because they undermined the credibility of the United Nations. Japan emphasized its commitment to instilling the highest levels of skill, and discipline in its troops prior to their deployment. It had also launched a programme to train civilian personnel in Asia to work in United Nations field missions.

89. Lastly, he reiterated the importance of collaboration between troop-contributing countries and other stakeholders, including major financial contributors and the Security Council, especially when decisions on peacekeeping had to be made. The Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations was an appropriate forum for such discussions and Japan was ready and able to contribute to them.

90. **Mr. Smith** (Fiji) said that his delegation was concerned about increasing attacks on peacekeepers, and United Nations personnel and facilities. It strongly condemned all acts of violence, and reiterated its support for all measures undertaken to promote the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel. Member States should support the work of restructuring the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to ensure full compliance with General Assembly resolution 61/279. His delegation looked forward to the short-term review and assessment to be undertaken by the Department of Field Support.

91. The increasing complexities of peacekeeping operations called for constant review of planning and execution strategies to ensure that they were multidimensional. Mandates must be designed in such a way as to ensure the seamless transition of United Nations efforts from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, and be matched with the appropriate financial, personnel and material resources. If they were to succeed, the strategies should be based on national ownership. In addition, strategies to support the cross-cutting issues of gender, children and HIV/AIDS should be based on the specific needs of the local communities in conflict situations.

92. His delegation welcomed the recent publication of a peacekeeping manual to provide a common understanding of peacekeeping doctrine and terminology and underscored that the personnel selected for peacekeeping missions should have the required professional background, expertise and training. Fiji was developing a peacekeeping training centre to enhance its ability to prepare its peacekeepers for the ever-changing demands.

*Rights of reply*

93. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the comments made by the representative of Israel were misleading and were part of a desperate campaign to divert the public's attention away from the daily crimes

committed by that terrorist State in the Arab-occupied territories. The follow-up reports of the Secretary-General made no mention of arms trafficking across the border between Syria and Lebanon. Moreover, the reports of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) had underscored the cooperation of all the parties, including Hizbullah. Conversely, they had described constant violations by Israel of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanon's territorial integrity. The comments made by the representative of Israel did not change the reality.

94. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan had described a long list of abuses; Israel seemed to be systematically targeting United Nations peacekeeping forces, their duty stations, and even United Nations personnel. The list commenced with the murder, in 1962, of the United Nations mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Count Bernadotte. In 1996, Israel had targeted a United Nations compound in southern Lebanon, killing 106 civilians who had taken refuge there and, in 2006, it had shelled two United Nations posts. The report of the Canadian Armed Forces mandated to investigate the attacks — which had killed the Canadian commander and three other observers — underlined that the posts had been deliberately targeted. There had also been an attack on United Nations peacekeeping forces in southern Lebanon. Syria was still waiting for an apology; Israel always classified such acts as "operational errors". The latest victim, a Belgian soldier, had been killed in September while on a mission to clear mines set by Israel in southern Lebanon, just 48 hours before the ceasefire.

95. **Mr. Mosseni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his Government had always supported the cause of a stable, just and durable peace in the Middle East and, in line with that position, had always given its spiritual support to the just struggle of the peoples of the region against occupation and the systematic violation of human rights of the Palestinian people. His delegation was not surprised that Israel, the main cause of instability in the region, had once again embarked on a political campaign to divert attention from its criminal record. It hoped that the presence of a new member of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations would not lead to politicization of that eminent body's noble work.

96. **Ms. Raz-Shechter** (Israel), noting that she would not respond to every vicious allegation, referred the representative of Iran to the many reports in the international media regarding Iran's assistance to terrorist organizations and the training of Hizbullah fighters in Iran. Security Council resolution 1747 (2007) had referred to Iran's failure to meeting the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Authority and had prohibited Iran from exporting weapons to countries in the area.

97. In the case of the Syrian Arab Republic, she again referred to the situation on the ground and to Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006) which referred to Syrian smuggling of weapons to Lebanon and to Hizbullah. She also mentioned Syria's assistance to certain Palestinian extremist groups and the rockets that had been launched against Israel in the summer of 2006.

98. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that everything he had mentioned was the truth, as documented in reports and documents of the United Nations. The representative of Israel should realize that although Israel had managed to deceive some people for a short period of time, it could not deceive everyone all the time. Israel had a culture of death and destruction which had been documented by the United Nations.

99. **Mr. Mosseni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation was used to hearing such allegations from the representative of Israel, and saw no need to respond to them.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*